

Lithuanians, Soviets begin talks

Leaflets call for anti-secession demonstration

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. (AP) — Soviet troops occupied another Communist Party building in Lithuania and an army helicopter on Monday dropped leaflets in the republic's capital, calling for an anti-secession demonstration, reports said.

Lithuanian leaders began talks with the Soviet army about their standoff with Moscow since declaring independence two weeks ago. They disagreed over whether the meeting reduced tension.

Sen. Edward Kennedy said in Moscow that President Mikhail Gorbachev reiterated his pledge not to use force except to save lives in the Baltic republic, which declared independence March 11.

Lithuanian Deputy Premier Romualdas Ozolas, one of two officials who met two Soviet military officers Monday, told reporters: "After coming out of this meeting,

I can say the mood has changed."

"It is evident the conflict will not be escalated," he said.

But Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis was more skeptical after the talks. He said he had not received clear assurances that no more buildings would be occupied and that the talks would mainly function "to avoid conflict between the military and citizens."

Paratroopers appeared in Vilnius on Sunday at the Higher Party School and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. Lithuanian officials said there also were soldiers at the Vilnius Communist Party headquarters.

Ozolas said that during the talks, the army said it occupied the buildings at the request of Lithuanian Communists who remain loyal to Moscow. The majority of the party split with Moscow in December to found an independent Communist

Party.

Reports in Vilnius on Monday night said paratroopers had occupied another building, the Communist Party committee's headquarters in the port of Klaipeda, 200 miles northwest of Vilnius.

Lithuanian journalist and activist Vilus Kavalauskas told reporters the paratroopers had arrived in response to a request by Klaipeda's assistant party chief. Kavalauskas did not say when the building was seized.

Landsbergis said Monday he also heard reports that soldiers appeared at a former Communist Party building in the Lithuanian city of Kaunas, 60 miles west of Vilnius, but did not remain to occupy it. He did not elaborate.

A helicopter dropped leaflets on Vilnius urging people to attend an

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anti-independence rally Tuesday afternoon in front of the parliament building. One set of leaflets was unsigned, while another was signed by "USSR citizens in Lithuania." The republic of 3.8 million has a large Russian minority.

"They are pushing the Lithuanian people into an abyss of independence," the leaflets warned. "Think! Will we be free in this 'free state' where the right to own property is given again into alien hands?"

"Rabble rousers!" snorted one woman as she turned away in disgust. Another glanced at a pamphlet, folded it up, and stuck it in her purse. "I need toilet paper," she said.

Soviet TV reported Monday night that members of a faction of the Lithuanian Communist Party still loyal to their Moscow-based parent party convened and accused the current Lithuanian leadership of "anti-socialist and, in essence, anti-Soviet policies."

The Soviet Union annexed the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia after taking control under terms of the 1940 Hitler-Stalin pact. Independence movements have also sprung up in Latvia, Estonia and other Soviet republics, posing one of the biggest

challenges to Gorbachev since he came to power in 1985.

Gorbachev, meeting with Kennedy in Moscow, said he was committed to solving the dispute with Lithuania peacefully and only would use troops if lives were in danger.

Kennedy, speaking to a news conference after he met with Gorbachev, said the Soviet leader "indicated to me that the position of the Soviet Union was that there would be no use of force unless the lives of others were threatened, and that he was committed to a peaceful resolution."

Gorbachev did not say whether he thought any threat to human life was imminent in Lithuania, the Massachusetts Democrat reported.

At Monday's talks in Vilnius, Ozolas and Lithuanian Interior Minister Marijonas Misiukonis met with Col. Viktor Smokarev, deputy chief of the Vilnius military garrison, and Col. Vladimir Trikoz of the Interior Ministry. They agreed not to take any steps affecting security without first informing the other side, Ozolas told reporters.

Ozolas said Lithuanians complained about the convoy of 100 military vehicles sent through downtown Vilnius early Saturday; military flights over the capital and other cities; and the occupation of the buildings.